

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The present claims each include at least one limitation neither disclosed by nor made obvious in view of the prior art.

For example, independent claims 35, 54 and 55 each include a limitation of a "sensor coupled to the conduit exterior, for sensing a condition external to the conduit interior". Note that Hall does not show sensors coupled to a conduit. Although Otten does discuss sensors coupled to a conduit, these sensors are all internal to the conduit and are only used for sensing a condition internal to the conduit. E.g., "flow," "pressure," "temperature," etc. See Otten at col. 11, lines 3-7.

Otten is concerned with flow control. This includes monitoring and control of conditions within a conduit or channel. There is no discussion in Otten of sensing a condition external to the channel. In this respect, Otten teaches away from the present invention which is directed to maintenance of vegetation that is, naturally, external to the conduit and channel. The present claims recite specific limitations to restrict the invention to vegetation maintenance applications that require sensing of conditions external to the channel. Note that there is no document cited in the prior art to teach a combining of Hall and Otten. Ostensibly, Otten would be used to control flow in industrial applications while Hall is concerned with agricultural applications.

New independent claims 58 and 77 and dependent claim 79 recite a limitation of sensors "coupled to the conduit exterior and spaced at regular intervals". Dependent claims recite that the spacing of the sensors lines up with a spacing of plants. Such spacing of sensors coupled to the conduit exterior is not shown in the art.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present claims are in condition for allowance and an early Notice of Allowance is earnestly sought. The undersigned may be contacted at the telephone number below at the Examiner's convenience if it would help in the prosecution of this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

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